

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 1427

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4  
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ECON, EAID, JM, US  
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH EDDIE SEAGA

REF: KINGSTON 1011; 1198

1. SUMMARY: EDDIE SEAGA, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION JAMAICA LABOR PARTY (JLP), CAME TO SEE ME MARCH 23 AT HIS REQUEST. DURING OUR TALK, SEAGA DESCRIBED HIS CONCERN THAT AN UN-QUALIFIED BAIL-OUT OF THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT BY THE U.S. WOULD MEAN THE END OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN JAMAICA AND REITERATED HIS DESIRE TO BE HEARD IN WASHINGTON AT A HIGH LEVEL. SEAGA IS GROWING DESPERATE AS THE JLP ASSESSES THE DIFFICULTIES OF MAINTAINING A VIABLE OPPOSITION. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER A BRIEF CONVERSATION ABOUT SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND MOST PARTICULARLY ABOUT RECENT EVENTS IN ZAIRE, WHICH SEAGA VIEWS IN OMINOUS TERMS, THE OPPOSITION LEADER STATED THAT HE IS CONCERNED OVER THE CHARACTER WHICH AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH JAMAICA APPEAR TO BE TAKING. HE SAID THAT SINCE THE VISIT OF P J PATTERSON TO WASHINGTON, IT IS HIS (SEAGA'S) VIEW THAT THE "PANIC" IN JAMAICA HAS INTENSIFIED, AND THAT THE MANAGERS  
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AND SKILLED ARE MAKING PLANS TO LEAVE JAMAICA IN EVEN LARGER NUMBERS THAN BEFORE, IN ANTICIPATION OF RESTRICTIONS ON IMMIGRATION. HE SAID THAT THIS GROUP HAS NOW CONCLUDED THAT THE U.S. IS ABOUT TO OFFER CONSIDERABLE ASSISTANCE TO THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT WITHOUT STRINGS, WITH THE RESULT THAT ITS COLLAPSE WILL BE AT LEAST POSTPONED. THIS PRE-

SUMED NEW RELATIONSHIP IS CAUSING SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITHIN THE JLP ITSELF, SAID SEAGA. AS HE PUT IT, "IN THE LAST ELECTION, WE HAD TO FIGHT THE PNP (PEOPLES NATIONAL PARTY), THE FULL RESOURCES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF JAMAICA, CUBAN MONEY, AND THE CANADIAN LOAN. NOW THE U.S. TREASURY HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE LIST". A NUMBER OF LEADING JLP MEMBERS AND MPS HAVE BEGUN THINKING OF LEAVING JAMAICA, AND THE MOST HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO DO IS TO URGE THAT THEY STAY ALTHOUGH AGREEING THAT THEY SHOULD MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN AT LEAST TO LEAVE QUICKLY SHOULD THE NEED ARISE. OTHERS ARE SIMPLY GIVING UP HOPE AND ABANDONING POLITICAL WORK. IN EITHER EVENT, THE JLP-- THE SOLE PARTY OF OPPOSITION--IS HURT.

3. SEAGA THEN SAID THAT HE BELIEVES IT NOW MORE NECESSARY THAN EVER FOR HIM TO VISIT WASHINGTON TO PLEAD THE CASE FOR MAKING AMERICAN ASSISTANCE IN SOME WAY CONTINGENT ON THE KINDS OF REFORMS HE HAS ALREADY DEMANDED OF THE PNP GOVERNMENT. TWO OF THESE HE LINKED DIRECTLY TO ASSISTANCE. FIRST, HE REMINDED ME THAT THERE ARE NO ADEQUATE FISCAL CONTROLS, A FACT WHICH MADE IT SIMPLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE DIRECT SUBVENTIONS TO PNP CANDIDATES AND WORKERS FOR ELECTORAL PURPOSES; THE ABSENCE OF SUCH CONTROLS MEANS THAT FUNDS PROVIDED FOR ASSISTANCE COULD BE DIVERTED TO UNINTENDED ENDS. SECOND, THROUGH "VICTIMIZATION" (WHICH IS MORE CONFIDENTIAL

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COLORFUL WAY OF DESCRIBING THE JAMAICAN "SPOILS SYSTEM") THE RULING PARTY HAS USED ITS PATRONAGE TO BUILD ITS SUPPORT; UNLESS HALTED, ONLY PNP LOYALISTS WOULD BE EMPLOYED IN PROJECTS MADE POSSIBLE BY NEW ASSISTANCE. TO CURE THESE ILLS, SEAGA WANTS A STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT ON EXPENDITURES AND A "FAIR OPPORTUNITIES ACT" (SEE 76 KINGSTON 5555).

4. SEAGA ADDED THAT HE REMAINS EQUALLY COMMITTED TO HIS OTHER REFORM PROPOSALS. AN INDEPENDENT, AUTONOMOUS ELECTION COMMISSION REMAINS A CENTRAL NEED, AND HE CITED THE RECENT ELECTIONS IN INDIA AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT FREELY CONDUCTED ELECTIONS CAN MEAN. HE ADDED THAT H PARTY'S POSITION ON THIS DEMAND IS FIRM, AND UNLESS HE SEES PROGRESS, THE JLP MAY BEGIN A "NON-COOPERATION" CAMPAIGN. HE THEN SAID THAT JAMAICANS ARE IN DESPERATE NEED OF SAFEGUARDS OF THEIR HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS AS A

RESULT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY POWERS CONFERRED ON  
GOVERNMENT BY THE "STATE OF EMERGENCY." HE FEARS  
THAT THESE RIGHTS WILL SOON BE PLACED IN EVEN GREATER  
JEOPARDY AS JAMAICA MOVES INTO ECONOMIC CATASTROPHE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINGSTON 1427

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AND THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO THE PUBLIC REACTION  
WITH REPRESSION.

5. AFTER AGAIN STRESSING HIS OWN DISMAY AT THE  
ANOMALY OF THE U.S. "PROPPING UP" A GOVERNMENT WHICH  
SEEMS CERTAIN TO BE FORCED INTO REPRESSION, SEAGA  
SAID THAT IT IS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT THAT WASHINGTON  
BE BROUGHT TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS HAPPENING  
-- AND LIKELY TO HAPPEN-- IN JAMAICA. IN ACCORDANCE  
WITH STATE 51402 AND 59040, I EXPLAINED TO SEAGA THAT  
HE SHOULD CERTAINLY DEFER ANY VISIT UNTIL THE EXTENT  
AND CHARACTER OF ANY FURTHER ASSISTANCE BECAME  
BETTER DEFINED. HE AGREED, REMINDING ME THAT HE  
PLANNED TO VISIT CAMBRIDGE IN MID-JUNE. HE THEN  
SAID THAT HE BELIEVES THAT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE  
PATTERSON VISIT, THE SECRETARY MUST BE TOLD THE OTHER  
SIDE OF THE STORY. I TOLD SEAGA THAT HE SHOULD NOT  
EXPECT TO SEE THE SECRETARY BUT WOULD BE ABLE TO  
TALK TO THE DECISION-MAKERS IN ARA, WHICH WAS ALMOST  
MORE IMPORTANT. TAKEN ABACK, SEAGA SAID THAT IF HE  
WERE NOT ABLE TO SEE THE SECRETARY IT WOULD BE DAMA-  
GING TO HIS PRESTIGE AND HE SAW LITTLE POINT IN  
VISITING THE DEPARTMENT. SOMEONE AT A LOWER LEVEL  
IN THE JLP WOULD BE ADEQUATE. HE INQUIRED AS TO  
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THE LEVEL MANLEY HAD BEEN RECEIVED WHEN HE WAS LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, AND SAID HE COULD ACCEPT NO LESS.

6. COMMENT: SEAGA GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF A MAN WHO IS VERY MUCH UNDER THE GUN, AND WE SUSPECT IT MAY BE THE RESULT OF QUESTIONS FROM WITHIN THE JLP REGARDING HIS LEADERSHIP. HE CONTINUES TO PLACE BLAME FOR HIS PARTY'S EXTREMELY POOR SHOWING ON CORRUPT PRACTICES BY THE PNP, PARTICULARLY THROUGH ITS CONTROL OF THE INSTRUMENTALITIES OF GOVERNMENT. THE PNP DOES APPEAR TO HAVE RELIED ON OVER-KILL, AND ITS WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN IRREGULARITIES IS UNDOUBTED, BUT THE JLP LOST DECEMBER'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND THE RECENT PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS JUST AS SURELY AS THE PNP WON THEM. SEAGA, AS JLP LEADER, PLANNED THE PARTY'S STRATEGY, AND HE IS GETTING MUCH OF THE BLAME FOR THE POOR SHOWING.

7. BEFORE TURNING TO A PRIVATE MATTER (U.S. VISAS FOR HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN), SEAGA RESTATED HIS VIEW THAT HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS IN JAMAICA ARE SERIOUSLY THREATENED, AND SAID THAT SINCE THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING THE ADOPTION OF REGULATIONS BLOCKING THE DEPARTURE OF SKILLED PEOPLE FROM THE ISLAND, A REFUGEE PROBLEM MAY SOON MATERIALIZE. HE SAID THAT HE WAS ANXIOUS TO LEARN WHETHER THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS HAS A CORRESPONDENT IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES, AND IF IT DOES, WHO HE MIGHT BE AND WHERE HE MIGHT BE REACHED. HE ADDED IN THE SAME VISION THAT HE IS PLANNING TO VISIT LONDON IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND PROPOSES TO DISCUSS CONDITIONS IN JAMAICA WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL; WE ASSUME HE WILL RAISE THE CASES OF SENATOR PEARNELL CHARLES AND PETER WHITTING-  
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HAM, LEADER OF THE JLP'S YOUTH FRONT. HE TALKS OF "GOING TO THE COUNTRY" WITH IT, BUT IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT HE WILL HAVE ANY SUCCESS, GIVEN THE HOPELESS AND FATALISTIC APATHY OF OPPOSITION GROUPS, INCLUDING THE JLP.

8. SEAGA IS, I THINK, SERIOUSLY AND PROPERLY CON-

CERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HIS PARTY AND TWO-PARTY  
PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN JAMAICA. AT THE PROPER  
TIME, WHETHER IT DISTURBS MANLEY OR NOT, I  
CONTINUE TO BELIEVE WE OWE HIM AT LEAST A HEARING.

9. THE PROSPECT FOR FURTHER REPRESSION IN JAMAICA IS  
REAL. HOWEVER, I THINK THAT THE CONSTRAINTS BUILT  
INTO OUR ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION AND THE POSITIONS  
TAKEN BY THE NEW ADMINISTRATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS WILL  
SUFFICE TO HIGHLIGHT THE ISSUE IF IT ARISES. IF,  
HOWEVER, WE ARE TO PAY MORE THAN LIP SERVICE TO "OUR  
COMMON HERITAGE OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS" (STATE  
056023) AND NOT BETRAY OUR TRADITIONAL FRIENDS, WE  
MUST SURELY EXERCISE OUR RIGHT TO A CONTINUED DIALOGUE  
WITH THE OPPOSITION.  
GERARD

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## Message Attributes

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